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ABSTRACT

This report of the investigation into East European newspaper treatment of the accident at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in the spring of 1979 focuses on the Czech and Slovak media, particularly on the Slovak Communist Party's daily newspaper, "Pravda." The response of the media of other East European countries to energy questions is also summarized. Attention is given to political, cultural, and historical patterns and traditions, and a note on dissident treatment of the nuclear power issue is included. The following observations emerged from the study: (1) there were significant distinctions among the reports of different media: (2) sources for gathering news were often only the governmental press agencies: (3) the social, political, and economic contexts of a news story were often decisive factors in how the story was written: and (4) with the possible exception of Yugoslavia, the media of Eastern Europe seemed to lack diversity. (AEA)

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International Div.

THE EAST EUROPEAN PRESS AND THREE-MILE ISLAND

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THE EAST EUROPEAN PRESS AND THREE-MILE ISLAND*

For some twenty years, Wilbur Schramm's chapter on "The Soviet Communist Theory of Press" has defined the Western approach to the study of the Communist media.[1] Writing at a time when Stalin was being demythologized, Schramm described the Soviet communist system as monolithic, guided by unity of purpose and operation. Although Schramm's chapter provided a carefully structured framework of the theory behind the operation of the mass media in Soviet society, he spent little time explaining how the press system worked in practice. He perhaps assumed that performance would naturally flow from structure.

The notion of "Soviet control" of information has blinded many international communication specialists to the types of debates which go on within the press of the so-called Communist countries. Research and writing has focused more on the outwardly undemocratic form of the press, and has been far too unaware, even with the given constraints, of the less than unified operation of the press. This theory of a unified press directed by a monolithic party, plus a general tendency to compare everything to the democratic model of the American media with its first amendment/free press underpinnings has blinded researchers to how the press often reflects splits within a system. The debate on Khrushchev between Pravda and Izvestia in 1964 is perhaps the best known case. It is not unique, however. When Chinese troops prepared to invade Vietnam in the late winter of 1979, three important Soviet newspapers took distinctly different approaches in their analyses of U.S. influence on Chinese actions. Izvestia

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was the most favorable toward the U.S. Political observer A. Bovin wrote:

> ...[T]he Americans are now strenuously emphasizing that they did their best to talk their Chinese friends out of extensive military operations on the border with Vietnam. That is probably so. For the Americans realized that China's attack on Vietnam...would place Washington and all Western "appeasers" of China in an extremely ambiguous and politically vulnerable position.[2]

Pravda took a more critical position, as outlined by V. Korionov:

> It must be noted that the aggression was launched practically the day after the Chinese vice-premier's trip to the United States. No propagandist twists and turns will help to hide the responsibility of those circles in the United States who contributed directly or indirectly to Peking's actions.[3]

For the Army newspaper, Krasnaya zvezda (Red Star), the U.S. involvement could not have been merely "indirect". Col. A. Leontyev based his argument on the U.S. press:

> "Well-informed political commentators and military specialists believe that China's relations with the United States are encouraging China's new aggressiveness," America's the Christian Science Monitor wrote recently. ....Having completed its military preparations, the Peking leadership endeavored to secure political support from the United States for its aggression. The American capital alleges that these endeavors were unsuccessful and that the Americans "tried to persuade" Peking not to attack Vietnam. But not even the U.S. press believes this.

If this is a controlled press, the control is clearly not uniform. This suggests that closer examination of the Communist press's treatment of particular subjects could be a useful enterprise. This process will help identify variables that explain differentials in press treatment, such as type of media, methods of news gathering, the social, political, historical, and economic context of the story, and the impact of news from abroad. While this exercise may not produce any major contributions to theory, it does suggest that existing theory may be discouraging useful research by specialists in international communications.[5] This examination might additionally offer some useful pointers for U.S. correspondents in using the easily accessible foreign press to develop meaningful stories. This study is not intended to demonstrate how the press can also serve as a reflecting board for various social, national, and political processes within Communist societies.[6]

The main subject in this paper is the East European press treatment of the accident at Three-Mile Island nuclear power plant in the spring of 1979. The accident might be expected to generate concern, because Eastern Europe is launched on a crash course to develop nuclear power. By 1990, energy from nuclear sources is planned to cover a quarter of the area's energy needs,[7] although it is quite possible these plans will not be met on schedule. The paper will focus on the response of the Czech and Slovak media, paying particular attention to the Slovak Communist Party daily Pravda, published less than 100 miles from the single presently operating reactor in Czechoslovakia. This approach, of course, will necessitate some consideration of energy questions in Eastern Europe. The paper will summarize the response of the media of the other East European countries to these same issues. Finally, the paper will make some suggestions as to how the observations gained from the treatment might be applied to the use of the East European press to study other important issues. Just as journalism historians should be uniquely qualified to make use of the press to study general historical topics, so should international communication specialists be particularly suited to use the contemporary press to examine contemporary issues and concerns.

The subject of nuclear power is a particularly useful one, because it has been far less susceptible to inclusion with political and foreign policy issues in the Soviet and East European press. Only recently has it been extensively included in the realm of "campaign issues" in which the media, à la Schramm, are carefully orchestrated to motivate the population to accomplish some system goal. For this reason, a content analysis, even of the simple column inches variety, is insufficient as a method. Rather, the approach must incorporate descriptive and summary analyses with some attention given to political, cultural and historical patterns and traditions. A note on dissident treatment of the nuclear power issue will be included, not because the dissidents might indirectly participate in the discussion, although they apparently do,

but because it will provide some warnings about the limitations of this approach.

* * *

Throughout the twentieth century, the Czech and Slovak press has been divided along political and national lines. The individual newspapers clearly represented the point of view of the sponsoring group. Contrary to English literature on the subject, during periods of apparent press freedom there were laws severely restricting the rights of the press during crises or in cases involving advocacy of measures threatening the constitution, a republican form of government, public order, or the office of the President. Papers could be suspended, subjected to prior censorship, or ordered to limit circulation.[8]

As suggested above, the amount of research on how the Soviet and East European press actually works is limited. The press has generally been seen as one element of a monolithic system. Most often quoted is a statement by the then Director-General of TASS, Nikolai Palgunov, in 1955, that, "Information is agitation by facts....The object of information must be selected facts and events which serve to make easier the realization by the Soviet people of the assignments before them."[9] The continued use of this remark suggests insufficient awareness of change or the potential for change within those societies. More recently, the Soviet writer Yevgeny Prokhorov has elaborated on "The Marxist Press Concept."[10] Far more attention needs to be paid to the actual functioning of the Communist press than to its ideological underpinnings. But the Palgunov line lives on.

John Merrill, in an article in his book, The Foreign Press, accepts unequivocally a comment he received in 1962 from Ladislav Derka of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington. "It is the mission of the Czechoslovak press to further and assist the Czechoslovak people in their endeavor for economic development and for peace and to play an important role in the education of the people for socialism," Derka observed.[11] F. Kempers, writing in the shadow of the 1968 liberalization in Czechoslovakia, asserted that the role of the

press had not changed.[12] There is certainly an irony in the continued acceptance of this line as accurately describing the operations of the Communist press. Books and articles which take the opinion that there is strong reason to distrust the truthfulness of Communists do not hesitate to take Communist statements at face value.

In addition to this tendency to take a black and white perspective, a serious lack in studies of the Communist press is a lack of cultural understanding of the area. Mark Hopkins, in the introduction to his book, Mass Media in the Soviet Union, admits, "As regards the Soviet press, my judgments are influenced by American values."[13] Hopkins does begin to provide some interesting information on news flow, including the fact that news abroad must go through fewer gatekeepers than domestic news must go, that the Soviet public has greater trust in foreign than in domestic reporting, and that "the minutiae of foreign news and information certainly cannot be dictated."[14]

Five publications deserve special attention. Gayle Durham Hannah's stimulating little volume, Soviet Information Networks, treats the press as only one aspect of a much broader system of communication.[15] Among other things, she observes a growing popular content in the mass media. Gertrude Robinson sets a high standard in Tito's Maverick Media, although some of her observations about the Yugoslav political affairs lack sophistication.[16] Ithiel de Sola Pool shows how the audience learns to read between the lines, in his article on "Communications in Totalitarian Societies."[17] Frank Kaplan, in his study of the role of the press in the "Prague Spring," draws on ideas presented in political science literature as "interest groups," but he tends to treat the press as a single interest group.[18] Anthony Buzek's now somewhat dated volume makes some tantalizing remarks on the Communist concept of news, but downplays the possibility of extracting information from it.[19] Clearly, there is considerable room for improvement.[20]

* * *

The energy situation in Czechoslovakia, as well as in many of the East European countries, is critical. Problems were evident at least by July 1973, and the Czechoslovak government made pleas for conservation.[21] Today, even casual visitors to Czechoslovakia are aware of the greatly reduced street lighting. Daylight savings time has been instituted in the summer to conserve energy. A serious winter storm in January 1979 brought about the reduction of television broadcasting schedules, and the adjustment of work and school schedules, all with the expressed aim of conserving energy.

Czechoslovakia is one of the five highest per capita consumers of energy in the world.[22] This supports a continuing industrialization effort, and the recent substantial increase in the production of consumer durables, but it also reflects obsolete technology and a lack of efficiency.[23] Although coal extraction has increased substantially since 1948, and coal deposits should provide coal for another century, it is becoming more and more difficult and expensive to extract the coal.[24] Oil and natural gas are imported almost exclusively from the Soviet Union.[25] However, since the Arab oil embargo of 1974, the USSR has slowed the growth of oil exports to its East European allies and rapidly increased the price it charges them for the oil.[26] A reduction of Soviet oil exports to Eastern Europe is possible in the 1980s.[27] At the same time, the rapid inflation in the West and problems within the Czechoslovak economy have made it increasingly difficult to purchase oil elsewhere.[28] A 2.5 billion dollar 20-year contract with Iran which was to provide Czechoslovakia with increased supplies of natural gas was rendered void by the overthrow of the Shah of Iran.[29] Hydroelectric power is very limited. The Czechoslovak authorities have also investigated other sources of power. For example, the government Commission for Fuel and Power, chaired by deputy premier Bohumil Šimon, has looked into solar energy, as well as the utilization of combustible

communal and industrial waste.[30] Plans have been announced for construction of a test geothermal power station in western Bohemia, to be operative by 1985-6.[31]

The use of nuclear power to provide energy was first planned with the signing of a 1955 agreement with the Soviet Union to build a 150 megawatt heavy water reactor, with completion scheduled for 1960. Not until December 1972, however, did the reactor go into operation. Construction was slowed by Soviet fears of the misuse of atomic energy by its allies, a fear quite justified in the case of the Chinese. In addition, the Soviets lacked a sufficient number of technicians to aid Czechoslovakia in the construction of the reactor, and the rapid growth in Soviet oil production led, in reality, to a condition of "surplus energy," so that there was little pressure to develop alternative sources.

Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union signed an agreement in April 1971 to begin construction of a second generation of reactors, this time of the light water type.[32] The first group of four 440 MW reactors of the VVER (Voronezh) type was begun at Jaslovské Bohunice, not far from Bratislava in western Slovakia. Hydraulic pressure tests on the first reactor were initiated June 30, 1978.[33] The reactor was slowly phased into actual use beginning December 17, 1978, and reached full steam the following March 23. Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin came to Czechoslovakia for the formal dedication in May 1979. As the tests were underway at Jaslovské Bohunice, the Soviet and Czechoslovak governments signed a contract to construct a second quartet of 440 MW reactors at Dukovany in Moravia.[34] Sixteen 1000 MW reactors are now also planned, beginning with one at Malovice in 1985.[35] The rapid increase in dependence on nuclear power is evident from the fact that by the end of 1980, only 4% of the power output is scheduled to be nuclear, while in 1985 the figure should be 17.4%,[36] up to 30-42% in 1990,[37] and perhaps 50 percent by the year

2000.[38] Jan Neumann, Chairman of the Czechoslovak Atomic Energy Commission, declared that Czechoslovakia is one of the first countries in the world to focus its energy policy on nuclear energy.[39] All demand increments for power after 1980 are to be covered by nuclear power stations.[40] Outside of the USSR, Czechoslovakia has the only factory for the production of nuclear reactors in Eastern Europe.[41] According to Rudé právo, the Czechoslovak Communist party daily, Czechoslovakia is the only Comecon country (apart from the USSR) with a heavy industry whose organization is sufficiently integrated vertically (i.e. it has metallurgical, heavy engineering and electrotechnical industry) such as is required for production of nuclear equipment. The Škoda plant in Plzeň, which is charged with constructing the materials for the reactors, has had some serious production difficulties, however.[42]

It must be pointed out that the Czech and Slovak press has not ignored the issue of nuclear safety, although articles on the subject do not usually appear in the daily press.[43] An institute for Radioecology and the Use of Nuclear Technology, established in Košice in January 1975, is devoted to the study of the influence of nuclear energy on the environment.[44] The Czechoslovak government played host in November 1978 to an international seminar on the safety problems of nuclear power plants. The session, held at Karlovy Vary and co-sponsored by the Interatomenergo Association (the cooperative East European atomic energy committee) and the Comecon permanent commission for electric power, addressed questions of design, construction and the operation of nuclear power plants and the ensuring of the safety of the workers there. The Central Information Office of the Czechoslovak Atomic Energy Commission has published, at least since 1975, a journal called The Safety of Atomic Installations.[45]

* * *

The impetus for this study grew out of a letter to the editor of the

New York Times[46] from H. Gordon Skilling, a professor of political science at the University of Toronto, who has carefully followed activities in Czechoslovakia for over 40 years. "Significantly, the news of Harrisburg has been played down in Czechoslovakia," he wrote. "The Slovak press avoided the subject entirely." Since I had been following the Slovak Communist Party newspaper, Pravda, on a regular basis, I knew that this statement was incorrect. Undeniably, neither the Czech nor the Slovak press gave the Three-Mile Island incident front-page coverage. That is not the pattern of the press in Czechoslovakia, where the front page is devoted to mobilizing the masses, and where news of disasters of any kind, except possibly political, is either downplayed or altogether lacking. It is true that the first direct mention of the incident did not appear until the Tuesday morning, April 3 issue of Pravda. A dispatch from the Četeka news agency, datelined Washington, reported on the efforts of a group of American specialists to repair the damaged reactor. It also noted President Carter's visit to the site on Sunday. The actual response of the press, however, was more diffuse, and only marginally directed specifically at Three-Mile Island. Let us look at that coverage during the month following the incident. It will show differences between Czech and Slovak papers and between broadcast and print coverage.

Ironically, on March 28, the date of the accident at Three-Mile Island, Pennsylvania, a joint session of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly heard a brief discussion regarding the safety of nuclear power. During the course of question time, a member of parliament, Dana Kancírová of the Slovak People's Party, asked Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal, "In connection with the construction of atomic power stations in Czechoslovakia, articles are appearing in the Austrian press that cast doubt on the security of these installations," she said, and asked for an explanation. Štrougal worded his reply carefully:

> We are devoting maximum attention to questions of the security of nuclear power stations and we know that these installations, designed and tested in the USSR, have high standards in this respect compared with world

> standards. We talked these matters over with Bruno Kreisky, federal chancellor of the Republic of Austria, and we agreed on experts of the two countries discussing together the questions concerning the security of nuclear power stations which are of interest to the Austrian side. Apart from that we are giving the International Atomic Energy Association the opportunity to inspect the construction and operation of the facilities of our nuclear power industry.[47]

Obviously, Štrougal was not replying to concerns raised by the accident at Three-Mile Island. Nor was he actually replying to issues raised by the Austrian media. Rather, he was addressing Document No. 22, issued November 27, 1978, by the Czechoslovak opposition group called Charter 77.[48] That document, prepared by unnnamed authors, reported two accidents which had occurred at the heavy water reactor at Jaslovské Bohunice. The first, which happened January 5, 1976, occurred when carbon dioxide billowed out of the plant's reactor and killed two technicians who could not escape since the emergency exit had been locked to prevent theft. The second accident, which took place on February 24, 1977, resulted from the improper installation of a fuel rod. Some radioactive gas was released into the atmosphere and part of the radioactive fluid was flushed through the plant's drainage system and contaminated a stream. The reactor was closed down before the end of the month. Although the document pointed out that Czechoslovakia has among the strictest safety regulations in the world, it noted that they are among the least respected. Štrougal did say, "The alleged fatal accidents caused by nuclear radiation in Jaslovské Bohunice are a fabrication of bourgeois propaganda."

Štrougal's answer to Kancírová did not address the problems of the heavy water reactor. Instead they referred to contemporary issues. The IAEA, he pointed out, could inspect "the construction and operation" of the facilities, that is, those which were now being built or were already in operation.

Štrougal also deflected attention from the problems of nuclear safety during a government progress report he gave in Parliament the same day.[49] He pointed out that the harsh winter which Czechoslovakia had just gone through had brought home several lessons about the economy, among them the need to

focus attention on the question of energy. He explained just how much coal would be saved by using nuclear power. He said that he hoped the second reactor in the atomic power station would be in operation by the end of 1979. He talked of plans to increase the import of electrical energy from the Soviet Union. This would be done, especially through participation in the construction, in cooperation with Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union, of the huge Chmelnitsky reactor in the Western Ukraine.

The Chmelnitsky reactor was mentioned again the next day, when a report appeared in the Czech and Slovak papers about the March 29 meeting of Comecon (the East European common market) executive committee meeting. The Chmelnitsky power station will have four 1000 MW reactors. Czechoslovakia will contribute 235 million convertible rubles out of a total cost of 1.5 billion rubles.

On the same day, a Četeka report, 24 lines long, appeared in Rudé právo noting that a serious breakdown had occurred at Three-Mile Island, including the release of radiation. A shorter piece, based on that report, appeared in several other Czech papers. The Slovak papers ignored the report.

The following Monday, April 2 (there is no Sunday edition for Czech or Slovak papers), Pravda commented editorially on the positive energy benefits to be achieved from the Chmelnitsky reactor. By 1984, it would be at half power, gradually increasing its output to 3.6 billion kilowatt hours annually.

On the following day, the next report concerning Three-Mile Island appeared. The story, datelined Washington, read in full as follows:

> A group of American experts continued yesterday with efforts to repair the damaged atomic reactor in the atomic power station not far from the city of Harrisburg in the U.S.A. (state of Pennsylvania), where there occurred last week a malfunction of the cooling system and the release of radioactive gas. On Sunday, the damaged power plant was visited by President of the USA James Carter, who after surveying the site, assured the inhabitants of the area that the government of the USA "does everything possible for their safety." American experts expect that even in case of the successful outcome of the repair efforts, it will not be possible in the near future to prevent the further release of radioactive gas. Two members of the American Congress, in this regard, have asked that all atomic power stations in the USA built by Babcock and Wilcox, the builders of the reactor at Harrisburg, be closed.[50]

Only Četeka's English-language dispatch of the same report spoke of a "wave of fear in the US" whether nuclear power is safe and a "grave political problem of President Carter."[51] It is not clear what the last phrase meant.

The last direct report about Three-Mile Island appeared in Pravda, April 5. Filed under the general rubric, "From the World," it was titled "Partial stabilization." It read in full as follows:

> After an effort which lasted several days, American experts succeeded last night in partially stabilizing the situation in the damaged nuclear reactor in the power station near the city of Harrisburg (state of Pennsylvania). The personal representative of President Carter, H. Denton, said that the inhabitants of the surrounding area are no longer threatened by immediate danger, although the normal function of the damaged cooling system has not been restored.[52]

An April 11 Radio Free Europe survey asserted that Czechoslovak radio and television networks did not mention Harrisburg at all in their newscasts or commentaries.[53]

Atomic power was not mentioned in Pravda again for nearly a week. On April 11, two feature articles discussed the subject. One of them, "Electricity for the 7th 5-year Plan [1981-5]" discussed the progress made in construction of the atomic power plants at Bohunice and Dukovany. It explained their importance in assuring adequate supplies of electricity and outlined various problems which had developed in construction plans. Ironically, it indicated that the workers at the plant were redoubling their efforts, including a willingness to work overtime, in order to speed up progress. The Charter 77 document had cited this "Stakhanovite approach" as one of the reasons for nuclear accidents. The second article, "The Energy of Tomorrow," furnished by the Soviet Novosti press agency, outlined the expected future development of atomic power, including the wide use of breeder reactors, as well as small reactors, to provide heating in housing developments. The penultimate paragraph assured readers that there was no need to fear reactor breakdowns or damage to the environment. It is not possible to determine whether this paragraph was added at the last minute as a response to Three-Mile Island,

although further developments suggest it was not.

The following day, a Četeka English language dispatch reported that legal regulations had recently been published in Czechoslovakia regarding the siting of nuclear power plants. Zdeněk Dlouhý, the head of the radiation safety department of the Nuclear Research Institute at Řež, just outside Prague, was quoted as saying.

> The localities are evaluated from the point of view of possible external effects on the safety of the installations, such as seismic activity, floods, extreme precipitation and winds, etc., as well as possible accidents as a result of a plane crash, explosion, fire, etc. The other group of the criteria takes into consideration the character of the place and the ability of the environment to prevent hazards to man and the sources of his nutrition.

A more direct response to Three-Mile Island is evident in a report published in Pravda, April 13. It described a press conference held by several deputy ministers on site at Bohunice the previous day, thereby trying to assure readers that there was no danger to anyone who might visit the reactor. In addition, stress was laid on the savings in coal consumption made possible by the use of atomic energy.

Nearly two weeks elapsed before the subject of nuclear energy was again mentioned in Pravda. The occasion was the visit to Jaslovské Bohunice by Konstantin Katushev, the Soviet deputy prime minister. Already, the article pointed out, some 600,000 tons of coal had been saved by the use of nuclear power. Once again, stress was laid on the fact that reactor visitors had set foot directly on the reactor site.[54] A picture on the front page showed men at work on the site.

The carefully developed response to the issues raised by the Three-Mile Island accident finally appeared in Rudé právo, May 18.[55] This commentary, which included a specific reference to Three-Mile Island, called nuclear energy "the only reliable solution" to the energy problem. It argued that a nuclear power station was a cleaner solution than thermal competitors, that the radiation produced is less than background levels in many areas of the world, and that

the antinuclear forces are led by the oil and gas monopolies who fear the loss of their monopoly. It acknowledged that "from time to time accidents do occur in nuclear power plants in various countries," but that in the majority of cases, human error was at fault. Further, it noted, "As far as the risks...are concerned, they have accompanied all progress. There is not one branch of industry or transportation whose development has not been accompanied by accidents and failures." Alternative energy sources, the article said, are of regional importance, at best. While none of these arguments was new, the article did offer a summary of the questions relating to nuclear safety.[56]

Five days later, Soviet Premier Kosygin visited Jaslovské Bohunice to formally dedicate the new reactor. Czechoslovak Prime Minister Štrougal, in introducing Kosygin, observed, "Our country (now) enters an era of intensive construction of a nuclear power industry so as to insure for the future light and heat for our homes (and) energy for our industry...."[57]

On the same day, Bratislava Pravda published an interview with Jozef Keher, the Czechoslovak deputy prime minister for technological and investment promotion. He reviewed the safety precautions involved in the construction of the reactor, explained the extent of the safety measures which would prevent an accident, and asserted that the probability of a serious breakdown of a nuclear power station is slight. According to his computations, only one nuclear accident in 1700 years could affect human health.

Articles clipped from various daily and weekly papers over the months of June and July 1979 return to most of the same themes which had been developed earlier.[58] Most are written in an optimistic upbeat style, conveying the message that nuclear energy is progress. For example,

> Today no one doubts that the future belongs to atomic energy. The structure of the world energy system will be completely transformed and the contribution of atomic plants will continually grow. In the not too distant future, atomic energy will become the main source of electrical energy.[59]

Most of the articles now mention, in passing, the concern which some people have about safety, and then quickly dismiss any worry as baseless. In 1978, in contrast, safety had not been an issue.[60] There is a tendency to concentrate attention in the articles on fears that the daily operation of a nuclear reactor could have an affect on the health of an individual. This, however, has not been a major concern of anti-nuclear groups.

* * *

An informal sampling of the response of the other East European countries to the nuclear safety issue shows a wide range of responses. Time permits only limited references to the varied social, political, historical, and economic factors which contribute to the differing treatments of the story in each country.

Albania provided the most outlandish comments, in part because it characterizes the propaganda which the Albanians have put forth for some time, in part because Albania has extensive supplies of oil, natural gas, lignite and hydro-power, so that she has no need, and apparently no plans, for nuclear power.[61] In a dispatch from Tirana, dated April 6, the Albanian press agency reported the Three-Mile Island accident spread potentially fatal radiation more than 15 miles away from the reactor. ATA went on to report:

> The inhabitants of this zone have pitched into protests fiercely condemning the capitalist monopolies and the U.S. administration for not adopting measures for the protection of the environment and the life of the people. The lethal accidents are frequent in the USA. They are closely linked with the use of the nuclear energy mainly for war purposes, with the antipeople and inhuman nature of U.S. imperialism.

Strangely, Radio Sofia, the Bulgarian station, was the first East European radio station to report news of Three-Mile Island. However, it did so at 2 a.m. on March 29, then repeated the same brief, factual report at precisely the same time the next morning.[62] Strictly factual press reports appeared in all major daily papers on April 1-2. The following day, President Carter's concern over the consequences of the accident was reported in Zemedelsko Zname. Bulgarian radio stations broadcast further details on Carter's visit April 2.

No commentary on the accident appeared until April 7, when Zemedelsko Zname dealt with the issue on page four. Only in the last paragraph did the paper offer other than factual information:

> This case demonstrates, as has been shown many times before, that the striving on the part of the monopolies for profits and "savings" aimed at profits frequently causes neglect of security regulations and necessary preventive measures and equipment. Thus egoistic business interests additionally harm the interest of the ordinary people. The responsibility lies not with nuclear energy, which, as the practice of the USSR and the other countries of the socialist community shows, is completely safe when the necessary requirements are observed. Responsibility lies with the desire for higher profits, which governs the behavior of the capitalist concerns.[63]

Bulgaria expects atomic power to provide 20 percent of its industry by 1990. Two reactors are now in operation and two more are planned.[64]

East Germany, long dependent on lignite for its energy needs, was the first Comecon country to operate a nuclear power reactor, beginning to do so in May 1966. The country now has at least three VVER-440 reactors in operation, producing 11% of her power, the highest percentage in Comecon.[65] By the year 2000, perhaps half the country's energy needs will be met by nuclear power.[66] The East Berlin radio differed from other East European responses to Three-Miles Island because it charged that "powerful energy monopolies" controlled the nuclear reactor sector of the economy and ignored safety precautions.[67] Other East European commentators had charged that the energy monopolies were behind the anti-nuclear activity so as to protect themselves. In another interesting development there, a Neues Deutschland article expressed concern about West Germany's nuclear waste disposal center at Gorleben, near the border between the two Germanies.[68]

Hungary has two reactors on order or under construction, both to become operational in the 1980s.[69] During the next five-year period, 1981-5, nuclear energy will supply half the country's new power supply.[70] Nevertheless, Hungary's reporting of Three-Mile Island was rather open. The Hungarian news media first carried information about the nuclear accident in a broadcast

on Radio Budapest on the morning of March 31. During the day, additional news was provided. The next day, two leading papers, Nepszabadsag and Nepsava, published articles about the accident. The former's article, 1000 words long, was a model of balance. The author, Istvan L. Szabo, suggested that there was a conflict of interests regarding the technical means that should be applied to resolve the problems at Three-Mile Island. "On this point the United States is confronted by a conflict between sacred private property and state intervention, which is spoken of as a bogeyman," he wrote. In general, the Hungarian coverage of Three-Mile Island was frank and open. Nuclear power had been an issue in Hungary for some time, however, with some discussion about the construction of a nuclear power plant at Pacs. The openness of the discussion may reflect an aspect of party leader János Kádar's policy of "he who is not against us is with us," and a willingness to trust the people in order to gain their trust.

Although it lacks sufficient energy supplies, Poland actually exports coal, preferring to sacrifice some consumer comforts at home in exchange for obtaining hard currency to buy goods on western markets. Poland now plans to complete its first VVER-440 reactor sometime in 1986. An additional reactor is planned.

A sampling of two Warsaw papers in the week following the Three-Mile Island accident shows that they provided adequate, but not extensive, factual reports. Intertwined was information about the joint nuclear reactor project at Chmelnitsky, mentioned above, and about the demonstrations by nuclear power opponents in West Germany. Two comments on the incident appeared in Zycie Warszawy, April 3 and 6. Both written by Karol Szyndzielorz, they indicated that the problem was one of technology. "Thus far, nuclear energy has been amazingly clean and safe," Szyndzielorz wrote. "There is no technology, however, that is infallible and faultless. This is the lesson of Harrisburg." Sensible regulations can limit the risk, he suggested, but cannot eliminate it totally.

Rumania, not surprisingly, presents a situation which varies from the

rest. She originally planned to construct a VVER-440 reactor in the first half of the 1980s. That plan has now been changed, as the Rumanians have bought natural uranium reactors from Canada. The first one should be ready by 1985.[71] By 1990, the Rumanians expect 20 percent of their energy supplies to come from nuclear power, although they will continue to draw from the oil deposits there for energy.

The first report about Three-Mile Island there came in a dispatch April 3 by the official news agency Agerpress. Generally straightforward, the concluding paragraph might seem out of place. In it, French prime minister Raymond Barre is quoted as saying the French nuclear power commitment will continue unabated. But, since the Rumanians have claimed kinship and alliance with the French for some years for largely political reasons, the quoting of a French source is not all that unusual. On April 6, the Rumanian news agency reported the French government had announced plans to accelerate construction of nuclear power plants. At least in the first week after the accident, there was no editorial comment in Rumania about the situation.

Yugoslavia featured the most open discussion in Eastern Europe of issues of nuclear power. Its first pressurized water reactor, being built by Westinghouse in Krsko, Slovenia, is scheduled to begin experimental operation by the end of 1980. The Three-Mile Island accident thus aroused considerable interest in Yugoslavia, particularly because strong opposition had already surfaced to the site chosen for the second nuclear reactor.

From the very beginning, all of Yugoslavia's newspapers and broadcasting outlets devoted considerable coverage to Three-Mile Island. In part, this is because there are few restrictions on the Yugoslav press. The Yugoslav papers themselves are much thicker than are papers elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Already on March 30, the influential paper Politika, published in Belgrade, carried a half-page report from New York about the accident. In addition to regular detailed coverage over the next week of the day-to-day developments,

there was coverage of foreign reaction. Several papers published an installment series on nuclear energy, with contributions from nuclear experts and scientists, which included attention to the domestic issues. The weekend supplement of Vjesnik (Zagreb, Croatia) carried a three-page spread on domestic nuclear issues in its edition of April 7. The Three-Mile Island response can be said to have climaxed in a Politika editorial April 7, which declared that nuclear energy is needed, but that it is impossible to ignore the popular fear of nuclear power. Therefore it urged more discussion, perhaps concluding with a referendum on the issue.[72]

Considerable attention has been paid in the West to questions of how the Soviet media have dealt with issues of nuclear power. For that reason, the subject will not be dealt with here.[73] A cursory examination of the material, however, suggests that the Soviets react to these problems far more quickly than East Europeans do. This may well be a function of how effectively "White Tass" provides information to Soviet decision-makers on what is happening in the West.[74] In addition, the Soviet responses to the problems raised by Three-Mile Island are far more ideologically larded and propagandistic than are the East European responses.[75]

* * *

This examination of press coverage of Three-Mile Island and the more general issue of nuclear power in Eastern Europe suggests several directions for further reasearch. Some of these topics have been mentioned briefly in the above discussion.

1. It is useful to compare the responses of the different types of media. The treatment of various subjects in broadcast media often differs from the print media. While the correspondent abroad may find it difficult to use broadcasting as a source, it can be examined in the West through printed sources such as the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. More detailed comparisons of broadcast and print media are needed than are attempted

here. The researcher should know that the more open discussion of sensitive subjects takes place in specialized periodicals.[76]

2. One needs to pay attention to news gathering. Many East European countries do not have overseas correspondents, but depend on the various government news services for their materials. For breaking news, many East European newspapers have no source other than their own individual government press agencies. This will restrict the amount of variation in newspapers. On the other hand, story selection by newspapers means that it is not very useful to rely on a single newspaper as a source of information. One is also more likely to find differences in approach to subject in commentaries, analyses and similar types of stories. It also must be remembered that East European journalistic style may differ considerably from that to which American reporters are accustomed. The most interesting point of a story may be buried.

3. One must be aware of the social, political and economic context of a news story.[77] A reporter trying to make a quick sampling of East European response to Three-Mile Island will find it difficult unless he has been observing the already existing debate on nuclear power issues in some of those countries, and is aware of the critical energy shortage facing Eastern Europe.

4. When considering news flow in East European countries, some way has to be developed to investigate in more detailed, systematic fashion the impact of news from outside. A portion of the population of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia can listen to or see regular broadcasts from Western Europe. The shortwave Western broadcasts also penetrate into the East European countries, even if the degree to which they are listened to is unclear.[78]

From the perspective of the United States, or even of Western Europe, of course, the media of Eastern Europe seem uniformly gray. With the possible exception of Yugoslavia, there is by no means free and open discussion of issues. On the other hand, it is possible to find distinctions between the

reports of different media. There is interesting and useful information which can be extracted after the ideological jargon is discarded, a process which may require some training in Russian-East European area studies.

Research should be directed toward discovering how that information comes through, toward discovering how each individual system works, not how current theory says it should work.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Wilbur Schramm, "The Soviet Communist Theory of the Press," in Frederick Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), pp. 105-146.

[2]Izvestia, February 20, 1979, p. 5.

[3]Pravda, February 21, 1979, p. 5.

[4]Krasnaya zvezda, February 21, 1979, p. 3.

[5]One of the judges of this paper suggested that the Schramm theory has had much greater sway in the classroom than in research. While this may be true, there still are problems, as the brief literature review which follows suggests.

[6]Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality. 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), is the major influence behind such works. See for example, Roman Szporluk, "West Ukraine and West Belorussia: Historical Tradition, Social Communication, and Linguistic Assimilation," Soviet Studies, Vol. 31, No. 1 (January 1979), pp. 76-98; and Roman Szporluk, "Kiev's New Paper: A Status Guide," Soviet Analyst, Vol. 7, No. 5 (May 9, 1978), pp. 6-7.

[7]Cam Hudson, "Winter Power Situation in Eastern Europe," Radio Free Europe RAD Background Report 260 (26 November 1979).

[8]Kenneth E. Olson, The History Makers: The Press of Europe From Its Beginnings through 1965 (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1966) is just riddled with errors, internal inconsistencies, and misspellings. It is a random collection of unverified facts posing as literature. Frank L. Kaplan, "The Czech and Slovak Press: The First 100 Years," Journalism Monographs No. 47 (January 1977) is an improvement, but is still not systematic and is far too dependent on non-Czech sources, such as Olson. An interesting memoir, František Veselý, Neostrým perom: Z rozpomienok novinára (Bratislava: Inštitút pre výskum masových komunikačných prostriedkov, 1969) is a fascinating memoir of the life of a newspaperman on the influential Slovak Agrarian party newspaper, Slovenský denník, between the wars.

[9]Theodore E. Kruglak, The Two Faces of Tass (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), p. 80.

[10]In International and Intercultural Communication, Heinz-Diedrich Fischer and John Merrill, eds., pp. 99-114.

[11]John Merrill, The Foreign Press (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1964), p. 118.

[12]F. Kempers, "Communist Information Policy in Practice: Reporting of Events in Czechoslovakia and Poland by the Party Press of 'Friendly Nations'," Gazette, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1968), pp. 271-2.

[13]New York: Western Publishing Co., 1970, p. vii.

[14]Ibid., p. 272.

[15]Gayle Durham Hannah, Soviet Information Networks (Washington, 1977). Dr. Hannah has also published several monographs under the names Gayle F. Durham and Gayle Hollander. Rosemarie Rogers has written similar studies on Soviet media.

[16]Gertrude Robinson, Tito's Maverick Media (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977). Chapter 7, "News of the World," pp. 130-53, is especially relevant to this paper.

[17]"Communications in Totalitarian Societies," in Handbook of Communication, Ithiel de Sola Pool, ed., (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1973). This article also provides a wealth of bibliographical information, pp. 462-520.

[18]Winter Into Spring: The Czechoslovak Press and the Reform Movement 1963-1968 (New York: Columbia University Press/East European Quarterly, 1977).

[19]How the Communist Press Works (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964).

[20]Burton Paulu, Radio and Television Broadcasting in Eastern Europe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974) demonstrates some of the problems: there is almost nothing in East European languages used as source material.

[21]Rudé právo, July 24, 1973.

[22]Radio Hvezda, 14 December 1978. Melvyn B. Nathanson, "Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union," in F.C. Williams and D. Deese, eds., Nuclear Nonproliferation: The Spent Fuel Problem (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 49, says it is the third highest. Figures published in Pravda (Bratislava) showed 5.7 tons of energy-generating fuels per year vs. USSR-4.8, West Germany-4.4, Poland-3.6, France and Hungary-3.1 each.

[23]Zemědělské noviny, 16 July 1974.

[24]Radio Free Europe Research Reports-Czechoslovakia/42 (21 November 1975). The intense effort to get the coal is having a negative environmental impact. P.S. Neporozhny, the Soviet Minister of Power Generation, while on a visit to Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1978, praised the efforts of Czechoslovak builders of power stations, but he said that his visit to the open-cast mines in the Most area of North Bohemia had made a very sad impression on him. He saw the construction of atomic power stations as the only feasible solution-Rudé právo, 9 June 1978.

[25]In 1970, Czechoslovakia imported 9,798,000 tons of oil, of which 95.96% came from the USSR. In 1978, Czechoslovakia imported 18,577,000 tons of oil, of which 95.34% came from the Soviet Union, and 0.80% from Iraq. Czechoslovakia itself produced only 117,000 tons of oil in 1978 (down one-third in 5 years), of which 56% came from the Czech Lands and 44% from Slovakia. This amounts to

only 0.63% of total oil consumption. Statistická ročenka ČSSR 1979, pp. 378, 445.

[26]UPI and dpa dispatches of February 5, 1975, as cited in RFE Situation Report Czechoslovakia 6 (12 February 1975) reported the first price increase to have more than doubled the old price.

[27]Antonín Rusek ml., "Energetická kríza v Československu," Naše snahy, Vol. 15, No. 2 (March-April 1979), pp. 9-10.

[28]Czechoslovakia uses a portion of its oil imports as raw materials for its chemical industry. Domestic production of crude oil is negligible.

[29]See discussion in RFE Czechoslovak Situation Report 21 (28 May 1975). In 1974, imports of Soviet natural gas covered 82% of Czechoslovakia's requirements-Tribuna, 26 June 1974. "Volunteers" from Czechoslovakia have helped with the construction of the Orenburg gas pipeline from the USSR to Eastern Europe. The labor will be repaid by natural gas-Zahraniční Obchod, No. 11/1974.

[30]Rudé právo, 19 October 1978.

[31]Zemědělské noviny, 23 October 1978.

[32]Some observations on Soviet-Czechoslovak joint activities on nuclear power are provided in Karel Barabas, "Výsledky a perspektívy spolupráce v oblasti jaderné energetiky mezi ČSSR a SSSR," Zahraniční Obchod, No. 11/1974.

[33]Rudé právo, 30 June 1978.

[34]Lidová demokracie, 28 September 1978. A further four units will be built at Mochovice, scheduled for operation in 1985-6. Revue obchodu, průmyslu, hospodářství 1/January 1978.

[35]Svět hospodářství, 17 November 1978.

[36]Svobodné slovo, 7 April 1978.

[37]30%-Rudé právo, 24 August 1978; 33%-Svobodné slovo, 7 April 1978; 42%-dpa, 8 March 1979; 42%-Värmlands Folkblad, 16 June 1979.

[38]Slowo Powszechne, 17 May 1979.

[39]Četeka, 21 February 1979.

[40]RFE Czechoslovak Situation Report 1 (10 January 1978).

[41]RFE Czechoslovak Situation Report 1 (14 January 1976). An agreement between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, signed May 30, 1980, stipulates that Czechoslovakia will be the primary supplier of reactors to the Comecon countries, Rudé právo, May 31, 1980.

[42]These difficulties may have contributed to the ouster of Zdeněk Puček, the Minister of Metallurgy and Heavy Engineering in December 1979, according to Czechoslovak Situation Report 38 (RFE) of 19 December 1979.

[43]These are summarized in RFE Czechoslovak Situation Report 38 (21 November 1978).

[44]Práca, 29 July 1977.

[45]Issue No. 2 of 1979 carried an article concerning security recommendations and requirements, as well as a listing of articles published in the journal during the period 1975-8.

[46]New York Times, May 21, 1979, p. 18.

[47]Rudé právo, 29 March 1979. Two rounds of talks have been held so far, one in July 1979, the second June 30-July 2, 1980. Reuter from Vienna, 7 July 1980.

[48]Full text available in Listy, Vol. 9, No. 4 (1979), pp. 55-9.

[49]Pravda, 29 March 1979.

[50]Pravda, 3 April 1979.

[51]Radio Free Europe RAD Background Report 81 (11 April 1979).

[52]Pravda, 5 April 1979.

[53]Note, however, that the RFE survey failed to see the Bratislava Pravda coverage.

[54]Pravda, 26 April 1979.

[55]Karel Sršeň, "Kde je pravda?," Rudé právo, 18 May 1979.

[56]RFE Czechoslovak Situation Report 38 (21 November 1978).

[57]Moscow Pravda, 24 May 1979.

[58]Jan Lipavský, "Čím je jaderná energetika?" Tribuna 25/1979 (20 June), p. 17; "Budoucnost klepe na dveře," Hospodářské noviny Vol. 23, No. 26 (29 June 1979), p. 3; and Rudé právo has a full page of articles in issue of 27 June 1979.

[59]Rudé právo, 27 June 1979, p. 4.

[60]e.g. Jaroslav Tomčík, "Před první velkou zkouškou," Tribuna 24/1978 (11 June), pp. 12-13; Jaroslav Tomčík, "Budoucnost patří jaderné energetice," Tribuna 19/1978 (10 May), pp. 12-13.

[61]Nathanson, p. 52.

[62]RFE RAD Background Report 81 (11 April 1979).

[63]Ibid.

[64]Värmlands Folkblad, 17 June 1979; New York Times, 30 March 1980.

[65]Nathanson, p. 50; according to the New York Times, 30 March 1980, a total of four reactors are in operation with 5 more planned.

[66]Slowo powszechne, 17 May 1979.

[67]FBIS 5 April 1979, II-e 1.

[68]Neues Deutschland, 20 April 1979.

[69]Nathanson, p. 51.

[70]Wall Street Journal, 11 January 1980.

[71]RFE Rumanian Situation Report 15, 17 August 1979.

[72]The opposition to the siting of the second nuclear power plant was successful. Zdenko Antic, "Opposition to Nuclear Reactor Construction in Yugoslavia Successful," RAD Background Report (RFE) No. 163, 23 July 1979.

[73]Among the articles which provide useful information are these: Wil Lepkowski, "U.S.S.R. reaches takeoff in nuclear power," Chemical and Engineering News (Industrial Edition), Vol. 56, No. 45 (6 November 1978), pp. 28-36; Soviet World Outlook, Vol. 4, No. 4 (16 April 1979), pp. 2-4; Nils Kellgren, "Energiproblem i öststaterna trots stora naturtillgånger," Värmlands Folkblad, 16 June 1979, p. 2; "Soviet Nuclear Energy: 'Confident Optimism'," Soviet Analyst, Vol. 8, No. 8 (1979), pp. 3-5; Radio Liberty Research, No. 116, 149, and 379 (1979). See also Zhores A. Medvedev, Nuclear Disaster in the Urals (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979).

[74]Apparently named for the color of the paper on which it appears, it is almost wholly made up of information available to readers of Western newspapers. See Hedrick Smith, The Russians (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), pp. 474-5, and Robert G. Kaiser, Russia: The People and the Power (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), pp. 252-3. Red Tanjug serves a similar function in Yugoslavia, viz Robinson, pp. 139-140.

[75]An interesting article, "Atomic Energy: Accomplishments and Problems," by Mikolai Dollezhal and Yurii Koryakin, appeared in the theoretical journal, Kommunist No. 14/1979, pp. 19-28. It refers to the "historical necessity of atomic power" but points out that certain problems cannot be ignored. It recommended that nuclear power stations be located in less populous sections of the country, in part because the Western sections of the USSR will soon reach their "ecological capacity". Another interesting article appeared in Sovetskaya Rossiya, April 30, 1980, in which Yu. V. Markov, the deputy director of Soyuzatomenergo, a division of the USSR Ministry of Power and Electrification, admitted that there may have been "a number of difficulties" early in the development of nuclear power, and that it was not impossible for accidents to occur today. The Pravda science correspondent, incidentally, in a January 15, 1980 article, tried to dissipate the fears raised in the Kommunist article.

[76]This point was made by Jacques Ellul 20 years ago: "...[W]e find extremely violent, specific, and profound criticism in specialized periodicals.... If one really wants to know and understand the shortcomings of the Soviet regime, one can find a mine of precise and impartial information in these magazines." Propaganda (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 215. (The French original appeared in 1962).

[77]The importance of knowing the history, politics, etc. of a country is mentioned by Burton Paulu, Radio and Television Broadcasting in Eastern Europe (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1974), p. 3. Unfortunately, Prof. Paulu does not adequately incorporate this knowledge in his discussion of

broadcast media, but instead leaves it as a separate matter.

[78]See Hopkins, pp. 276-7, and Pool, pp. 478-91.